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Progress report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions

Report of the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. In its resolution 1999/1 of 2 February 1999, the Economic and Social Council welcomed the progress made in strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, as reflected in the joint exploratory review of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions,[1] and encouraged further cooperation in this regard. The Council also encouraged the organizations that had participated in the joint exploratory review collectively to undertake a renewed effort to concert policy approaches and give new impetus to collaborative actions by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, in particular in the area of poverty eradication. The Council decided to make further efforts to promote an open dialogue at the intergovernmental level with a view to building a strategic partnership and integrated development approaches.

2. In the same resolution, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a progress report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions at all levels, that is to say, the intergovernmental, Secretariat and country levels, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996. The present progress report responds to this mandate. It is intended to provide further information on the continuing deliberate building of a productive strategic partnership in all its aspects by highlighting some of the major initiatives, events and projects jointly undertaken recently in this context. The report does not seek to provide an exhaustive account of all relevant activities.

I. Intergovernmental cooperation

3. The second half of 1998 and the first few months of 1999 saw a series of events and initiatives that strengthened and advanced the policy-oriented interaction and dialogue between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions at the intergovernmental level. Although most of the interaction between the organizations takes place at the United Nations, especially at the Economic and Social Council, there is an increasing tendency to have such a dialogue also occur at the Bretton Woods institutions themselves. This deepening of a two-way interaction is an encouraging development which should contribute to increasing mutual understanding and confidence.

4. A fundamental new aspect that the reform of the United Nations system also highlighted is the need for creating an environment in which the institutions' governing bodies may connect. An increased dialogue among the governing bodies is in response to the need for high-level discussions on policies at the national and global levels, development cooperation, and commitment to issues of common concern such as poverty, financial stability and economic and social sustainability. As a result, the relationship between the institutions' governing bodies has undergone a major change in the past two years, with a series of moves towards greater dialogue and understanding of each other's mandates, functions, work processes and strategic approaches.

A. General Assembly

5. Staff of the Bretton Woods institutions are actively engaged with the work of the General Assembly. This was particularly evident during the deliberations of the Second and Third Committees of the Assembly in 1998 where senior officials of the Bretton Woods institutions participated in formal meetings as well as in briefings and panel discussions on specific issues of concern to the Assembly. The World Bank, in particular, collaborated closely with the United Nations Secretariat in providing background information and engaging in panel discussions on issues being deliberated by the Second and Third Committees. Senior staff of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided over a dozen briefings on economic and social issues such as the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, and the volatility of markets in the globalized — and increasingly market-driven — economy, as well as on social concerns and policies and taxation. The Bank has also provided and will continue to provide informal briefings to groups of countries. For instance, several briefings were organized for the Group of 77 (financing for development, new financial architecture), the European Union (EU) and the United States of America on financing for development and inter-institutional relations (particularly regarding the dialogue with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Member States have stated that these events proved to be a valuable and an effective means of enhancing the understanding of complex issues, such as the dynamics of the financial crisis.

6. The Bretton Woods institutions have actively supported and participated at the highest level in global conferences and the follow-up process. Both IMF and the World Bank are committed to carrying out the goals of the global conferences, a commitment which is reflected in their ongoing work programmes and in their participation in the inter-agency mechanism.

7. In September 1998, the General Assembly held a two-day high-level meeting on renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development partnership. The theme of the dialogue was "The social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications". The World Bank participated actively in this high-level dialogue on globalization.

8. In order to maintain an open environment in which ideas are shared and all stakeholders are informed about technical and political aspects of the range of work in the development area on an institutional level, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions are working to create means and venues for regular exchanges of information and knowledge. This important aspect of capacity-building needs further commitment and focus.

9. One vehicle for enhancing this type of interaction is the Vice-Presidential Seminar Series recently initiated by the World Bank. In this monthly series, the World Bank brings its Vice-Presidents to the United Nations to spend a full day engaging with the various relevant groups. Each Vice-Presidential Day consists of three primary events: a dialogue with agency, programme and fund, and Secretariat staff; a dialogue with relevant Ambassadors; and a lunchtime United Nations-wide seminar. To date, 11 Vice-Presidents of the World Bank have taken part in this programme.

10. In the course of the programme "World Bank's Vice-Presidential Days at the United Nations", as well as in other briefings and seminars organized for the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly and for the Economic and Social Council, senior officials of the Bank led discussions on a range of socio-economic issues facing the international community. These discussions included "Adjusting the role of Governments to globalization", "Heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) and the external debt crisis" in which IMF also participated, "Development and human rights" and "Cultural identity in a changing world". In 1999, senior officials of the Bank, in particular the Vice-Presidents for Europe and Central Asia, for External Affairs and United Nations Affairs, and for Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, made presentations on the issues of "Joint work in the region for Europe and Central Asia", "Mobilizing an effective World Bank-United Nations partnership: role of the comprehensive development framework" and "Effective development for low-income countries through poverty reduction and economic management". The Bank, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), is running a series of workshops on issues of concern to the United Nations entitled "Issues Related to the Functions and Working of the Bretton Woods Institutions". Currently, the focus of this very successful series is sustainable development.

11. The World Bank and IMF are involved extensively in the preparatory work for the high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development and are presently actively participating in facilitating the deliberations of the open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on Financing for Development. The Secretary of the Development Committee spoke at one of the Working Group's meetings.

B. Economic and Social Council

12. Interaction between the Economic and Social Council and representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions is of long standing. As has become the practice, the Managing Director of IMF and the President of the World Bank, together with the Executive Heads of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization, took part in a policy dialogue on important developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation, held in the context of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 1998 of the Economic and Social Council. The discussion, held in a format of a panel, addressed the topic of "Market access: developments since the Uruguay Round, implications, opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization". Following the debate, the Council, for the first time in its history, adopted a ministerial communiqué on the subject.[2]

13. In preparation for the discussions of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 1999 on "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women", a series of five panel discussions is being held in order to contribute to the deliberations of the Council and facilitate development of a results-oriented strategy on poverty eradication. The World Bank sponsored one of these panels devoted to the theme "Food security, basic infrastructure and natural resources as imperative dimensions of poverty eradication strategies". Furthermore, it is expected that the Managing Director of IMF and the President of the World Bank will again participate in the high-level policy dialogue of the Council in 1999.

14. Dialogue of a more direct intergovernmental nature is a more recent development: following up on the success of the first high-level meeting of the Economic and Social

Council with ministers of finance and development cooperation representing their countries in the Interim Committee of the Board of Governors on the International Monetary System and the Development Committee in April 1998, a second such meeting was held on 29 April 1999 on the theme of "Financing of international financial markets and stability in financing for development". This well-attended meeting again served as a valuable forum not only for a productive and policy-oriented dialogue among high-level officials responsible for finance, and development cooperation, and from foreign affairs, but especially for further strengthening and deepening of the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. The meeting, which concentrated in the Council Chamber much of the world's expertise on development, provided important insights on how the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions can work together more effectively in strengthening political and social foundations of the world economy.

15. Further new avenues of collaboration between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions are also being explored. In May 1998, a group of permanent representatives to the United Nations in New York had a meeting with the Executive Directors of the World Bank in Washington in the framework of an exchange programme organized by the Bank. Among the topics discussed at the meeting were financing for development, developing partnerships with the private sector, new policies and programmes in sustainable development, and globalization. The success of this new format of an intergovernmental dialogue encouraged the participants to suggest that such exchanges be continued. As a result, in February 1999, the World Bank Executive Board, led by its Chairman, the President of the Bank, participated in a first-ever visit to the United Nations. The group had a meeting with the President of the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General and held a productive discussion with the Council on such major development issues as a comprehensive approach to development, cooperation at the operational level, poverty eradication and sustainable development, financing for development in the current global financial environment and the international financial architecture, the advancement of women, and effectiveness and assessment of international development policies and programmes. A return visit by members of the Council to the Bank's headquarters is envisaged for the near future.

16. Following the example of the Economic and Social Council/World Bank interaction, a Special Dialogue between the IMF Executive Board and a group of permanent representatives of States members of the Council is planned, and a meeting will take place in early June 1999. This meeting will be the first of its kind held at the Fund. Among other things, this initiative will provide IMF and the United Nations with an opportunity to exchange information on their respective activities and policies, as well as to hear the reactions and views of the other side.

17. The recent initiative of the President of the World Bank on the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) provided an important impetus for focusing the ongoing debate, not only in the World Bank but system-wide, on ways to enhance the coherence and increase the effectiveness of development activities of the organizations of the United Nations system. For further consideration of the Comprehensive Development Framework proposal, in addition to testing at the country level, and discussions among senior staff of the Bank and the United Nations, deliberations of relevant policy matters have begun to take place in the context of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. This would help advance the broad international commitments endorsed at the recent global conferences, as well as the Agenda for Development,[3] and other legislation and United Nations initiatives.

18. The Bank has active, regular, ongoing participation in the functional commissions. Every commission has a management-level focal point at Bank headquarters. Bank management is actively engaged in the work of the commissions, by, *inter alia*, contributing to commission reporting and participating in regular meetings. In addition, cross-sectoral work takes place within the Bank on issues under the commissions' purview. In addition to well-established collaboration with such bodies as the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Statistical Commission, the World Bank has begun to redefine its relationship with the work of the Commission on Human Rights by participating in its plenary meetings and engaging in an increasing dialogue. The Bank continues to define its role in regard to the issues surrounding the right to development in particular.

19. IMF regularly attends the meetings of the following functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council: the Commission on the Status of Women, the Statistical Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Population and Development, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development. For the first time, IMF attended the 1999 session of the Commission on Human Settlements. The subjects under discussion in each commission determine the extent of IMF participation.

Therefore, depending on the subjects under discussion, IMF may also be an active participant in working groups of the various commissions as well.

20. As far as interaction with the executive boards of funds and programmes is concerned, the World Bank has begun to regularly attend the meetings of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA) in particular and will continue to work bilaterally with the agencies as needed. Currently, the Bank and UNDP have an active inter-agency group which meets and exchanges information on a regular basis.

C. Interim and Development Committees

21. As can be noted from the foregoing examples, active participation by the Bretton Woods institutions in the intergovernmental work of the United Nations is well established. The arrangements for the participation of the United Nations in the governing bodies of the Bank and the Fund are somewhat more limited. The United Nations has observer status at the semi-annual meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions. In October 1998, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, presented a statement to the Interim and Development Committees on behalf of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, which comprises the United Nations entities active in economic, social and related fields. The statement provided an opportunity to express the concerns of the United Nations over the global economic and financial situation and the negative effect it had on economic and social development. A written statement in a similar format was submitted to the Interim and Development Committees in April 1999. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs also participated in the restricted session discussion of the Development Committee which focused on principles and good practice in social policy. As reflected in the communiqué of the meeting, it was decided that further development of the basic social principles would be best pursued within the framework of the United Nations, as part of the international community's follow-up on the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[4] adopted at the World Summit for Social Development.

II. Secretariat level

22. One of the most long-standing and extensive forms of collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions is consultation and cooperation in the preparation of reports to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. This activity furnishes an important vehicle for improving coherence and unity of action of the system by providing Member States with more comprehensive and balanced policy analyses and recommendations. As one important example of this collaboration, the United Nations Secretariat drew on the expertise of the Bretton Woods institutions in preparing its main documents for the 1998–1999 cycle of reports to the Assembly and the Council in the area of international financial cooperation and development. Other examples included the World Bank's contribution to the mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women and to the report on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Bank also contributed extensively to the preparation of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 1999 of the Council on the theme "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women."

23. The programme of reform under way in the United Nations system has greatly contributed to a growing culture of cooperation and consultation throughout the system. Cooperation and partnership between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions continued to develop positively during the period under review. Regular consultations and meetings between the Secretary-General and the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions provide an important guidance and stimulus in this process. There has been a keen and consistent commitment on the part of the World Bank and IMF to collaborating closely with the United Nations proper and with all the organizations of the United Nations system. Senior managerial and other levels of staff of both IMF and the World Bank have actively participated in inter-agency committee meetings, seminars, panels and workshops, and contributed greatly to discussions directed at problem-solving of recurrent and emerging global economic and social issues/concerns.

24. The Executive Heads of the Bretton Woods institutions, who are members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), participated in the sessions of ACC in 1998 and 1999. This provided an opportunity for policy-oriented discussions on a number of issues of common concern to the United Nations system, in particular on poverty eradication, the promotion of a culture

of peace, the strategic framework for peace-building, the coordinated follow-up to major conferences and special initiatives, the safety and security of staff, and relations with the private sector and civil society. Also, the executive heads of the financial institutions, along with the executive heads of the other organizations of the system, participate in the "ACC retreats", which have been held in conjunction with ACC sessions. These allow the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to engage in a free-flowing and open dialogue on global and other issues that confront the United Nations system.

25. In addressing the problem of poverty eradication, ACC considered at its first session of 1998 a note entitled "Combating poverty: towards a common response", which was prepared at the request of the Secretary-General jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP and the World Bank. On the basis of this document, ACC issued a statement on its commitment for action on poverty eradication (E/1998/73). In addition, a relevant set of guidelines was endorsed by ACC, which should foster inter-agency cooperation at the field level.

26. The challenges of globalization and the financial crisis are fostering ever-greater United Nations-Bretton Woods institutions collaboration. The ACC conclusions in 1998 on the crisis highlight closer links between the World Bank and the United Nations and identify the following priorities: (a) to monitor the impact on societies and individuals; (b) to assist individual countries in carrying out necessary structural and institutional reforms; and (c) to help strengthen or build basic social services, livelihood opportunities and safety nets for the least fortunate. Actions are under way in all these areas.

27. Participation of the officials of the Bretton Woods institutions in briefings and panel discussions, in addition to fulfilling its primary function of facilitating the intergovernmental deliberations, contributed significantly to the task of enhancing collaboration at the Secretariat level between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions by making the policy-making processes more transparent and by improving communication.

28. Regarding the regional context, the collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions was particularly prominent in the context of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The World Bank is a leading agency in the implementation of the Special Initiatives and in the Tokyo Agenda for Action (A/53/559–S/1998/1015, annex I) adopted at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), 19–21 October 1998, a process in which IMF is also actively involved.

III. Country level

29. The building of strategic partnerships between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions is a process that is moving forward at the country level with various new avenues of collaboration being established.

30. Besides, at the level of ACC, the United Nations reform programme is also having a significant impact at the country level by building more cohesive country teams and by focusing attention on support for the implementation of global conference agreements and on the related social and economic concerns of Governments. The introduction of the Common Country Assessments (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) are elements of the United Nations reform programme that are already developing the ground for United Nations-Bretton Woods institutions collaboration at the country level. Although only tentative results are so far available from the pilot phase which included close involvement from representatives of the Bank and the Fund, it can already be seen that CCA and UNDAF are building greater cohesion among members of United Nations teams at the country level, are focusing United Nations capabilities in relation to national priorities and are at the same time providing the basis for an improved partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions. It is intended that such partnership should continue and expand. UNDAF documents have been under preparation in 18 pilot countries, of which 6 were co-signed by the World Bank representative as a member of the "United Nations country team". Three of those were also signed by IMF representatives. In a seventh case, the World Bank and IMF were "fully informed". Although agencies retain the distinctive character of their respective operations, these documents do aim to maximize the individual and collective impact of all United Nations programmes of assistance.

31. The revised guidelines for UNDAF and CCA, recently agreed in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), and circulated to all country offices and throughout the United Nations system, emphasize the importance of encouraging the involvement of the World Bank and IMF in the process. Such collaboration would focus at the country level, be determined by country conditions and take into account the need for flexibility. The guidelines state that

preparation of UNDAF documents should take into account the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of the World Bank,[5] policy framework papers and public investment programmes agreed between the government and the Bretton Woods institutions, and sector investment programmes and sector-wide approaches adopted by the government. As for the CCA, as it is put into effect it may become a useful basis for broad review and analysis of national development situations and for identification of key issues for policy and action within the United Nations system and beyond.

32. In the UNDAF document for Viet Nam, where an experiment has been under way to relate the UNDAF and the CAS of the World Bank, it is stated that "the World Bank wishes in particular to associate itself closely with the (UNDAF) process and its objectives, and is committed to close collaboration with the United Nations agencies in realizing its country assistance strategy". In Mali, the other site of experimentation on the relation of the CAS and UNDAF, the United Nations system was kept informed of the progress of drafting the CAS and had an opportunity to comment on it. The Bank participated in drafting the UNDAF and provided data and documentation to assist the process. In the UNDAF sign-off sheet, the World Bank committed itself to reinforcing collaboration with the agencies of the United Nations system during the implementation of the CAS. The United Nations and the World Bank have since agreed to undertake a joint review of the Viet Nam and Mali experiences, in order to determine what issues need to be addressed so as to build a more effective interface between the two instruments.

33. The World Bank President's proposal for a comprehensive development framework (CDF) has been the subject of a serious discussion within the United Nations system. Resident coordinators have been encouraged to respond in a positive and constructive manner to requests from either the World Bank or host Governments to participate in piloting the CDF process, while at the same time encouraging the Bank to participate in the CCA and UNDAF processes. These latter processes are continuing and should serve as a foundation for the engagement of country teams in dialogue with national partners and the World Bank on the CDF.

34. The CDF can be viewed as a manifestation of an emerging policy convergence between the Bank and the United Nations. In this regard, the Secretary-General has proposed that a task force be established, chaired jointly by the Bank and the United Nations, and also involving other key players, including donor and recipient country representatives. The Bank has responded positively to this proposal.

35. The CDF proposal may be seen as conceptually related to the ACC deliberations towards a strategic framework approach for addressing the complex needs of countries in crisis. In its resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998, paragraph 39, the General Assembly noted the urgent need to develop a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis, noted that the development of such an approach must involve national authorities, as well as the United Nations system, donors and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and also noted that national authorities must take a leading role in all aspects of the recovery plan.

36. The Bretton Woods institutions recognize a key role for the United Nations in situations where the Security Council has designated special actions in crisis countries and where special representatives of the Secretary-General have been appointed. The World Bank guidelines for action in crisis countries (*Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Role of the World Bank*, 1998) make frequent reference to the role of the United Nations and the importance of partnership in such situations. Similarly, the World Bank has been an active participant in the development of a United Nations strategic framework for Afghanistan, in the formulation of ACC generic guidelines for strategic frameworks for post-conflict peace-building, and in high-level arrangements with the United Nations and IMF related to various war-torn countries.[6] Recognition by the World Bank and IMF of the importance of early dialogue, and the need to participate in effective coordination mechanisms, provides further opportunity for enhanced cooperation in post-conflict environments. As a step in this direction, the World Bank has recently joined the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Humanitarian Assistance.

37. The United Nations and the World Bank also frequently cooperate in the area of aid coordination. In most programme countries, the United Nations (United Nations resident coordinator/UNDP resident representative), the World Bank or often the two together convene meetings with donor and national government representatives, to exchange information on current and planned programmes and to discuss critical policy issues. In some countries that use the Consultative Group mechanism, the resident coordinator chairs regular meetings of locally-represented donors, while the World Bank convenes the Consultative Group itself.

38. Thematic groups are increasingly being used by country teams as forums to encourage greater coherence and complementarity of actions by the United Nations system. In most of the countries where the World Bank has representation, it participates in one or more of the thematic groups, chairing or co-chairing a number of them. For example, as one of the co-sponsors of the Joint and Co-

Sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS), the Bank regularly participates in HIV/AIDS thematic groups, but also in such thematic groups as deal with poverty eradication, gender, environment, health, education, economic management and so on. IMF, having offices in fewer countries, participates in a handful of these thematic groups.

39. Country-level collaboration takes place between the World Bank and IMF missions and/or resident representatives and the United Nations resident coordinators and representatives of other United Nations agencies. In this regard, the Bank's process of decentralization to the field has increased the opportunities for this collaboration. A recent addition to the growing field of collaboration at the operational level is the training module that the World Bank provides to both Bank and United Nations resident representatives as part of their orientation programmes. In addition, the Bank is in the process of building regular communication vehicles, through a Web site, newsletter and so on, for the Bank's resident representatives to keep them informed about issues of mutual concern and interest.

40. Further examples of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions at the country level include activities in Tajikistan, where an intense collaboration continues between the IMF mission teams and United Nations representatives, and in most of the countries of Latin America and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), where the United Nations system is kept informed of activities and work programmes of the Bretton Woods institutions on a regular basis.

41. Collaboration between IMF and UNDP in providing technical assistance to countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East regions has been intense over the last 10 years. Such collaboration takes place on a daily basis in the design and delivery of programmes of technical cooperation to member States on a jointly financed basis. In financial terms, the value of such technical cooperation programmes — delivered in over 35 principally least developed and in many cases post-conflict countries embarking upon programmes of economic and financial reform — has amounted to approximately $100 million since 1990. The technical cooperation covers capacity-building in fiscal, monetary and statistical areas to support Governments' efforts to improve macroeconomic management and achieve sustainable levels of growth. It is by this means that the policy debate in New York and Washington is operationally translated into concrete, practical and visible form. Senior IMF and UNDP managers at the Deputy Managing Director/Associate Administrator level met recently to review cooperation between the two organizations and agreed to take a number of steps to expand the scope of such cooperation significantly in the coming years.

IV. Conclusion

42. A profound change in the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions towards developing an effective strategic partnership and integrated development approaches has already been amply documented, in particular in the joint exploratory review which confirmed that "a multifaceted, extensive and growing partnership" already existed. In the period since the report of the Secretary-General on the joint exploratory review was issued in June 1998, the interaction between the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations at all levels has been exceptionally fruitful. The forging of closer collaboration among the three institutions is increasingly being reflected by the undertaking of joint collaborative initiatives and by their acting on key common concerns. There has been a marked recognition by executive heads that the system is addressing system-wide issues of concern with a higher degree of coherence and coordination.

43. Challenges remain, however. These concern in particular the relationship between UNDAF and CDF, but they also concern making the efforts towards increased interaction between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions more reciprocal. Still, with the strong personal commitment of the Secretary-General and the Heads of the Bretton Woods institutions, it is likely that increased collaboration and cooperation will continue in the near future. Member States can contribute to this process immeasurably by better coordination of their individual positions at the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions.

Notes

[1] See report of the Secretary-General on the joint exploratory review of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/1998/61).

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. IV, para. 5.

[3] General Assembly resolution 51/240 of 20 June 1997, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[5] Examples of linkage between the CAS and UNDAF are the UNDAF documents for Viet Nam and Mali.

[6] For example, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the World Bank leads and coordinates external support to the reconstruction programme, while IMF provides macroeconomic policy advice, advice and technical assistance in a variety of areas, particularly the banking system, and essential balance-of-payments support. There are at least 18 inter-agency task forces and theme groups functioning in Bosnia and Herzegovina at present. The World Bank chairs four of these.

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Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on its nineteenth session

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I. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

1. At its nineteenth session, the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) decided that the Institute should continue to operate with present core staff until 31 December 1999 in order to enable it to comply with the mandate given by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1998/48 of 31 July 1998 and report to the Council at its substantive session of 1999 and to the General Assembly.

2. As a measure to increase the Institute's financial reserves, the Board recommended that Member States be encouraged to expedite payment of pledged contributions.

3. The Board authorized the President and the former President to meet with the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Management to discuss the issue of a waiver of the programme support costs and a rent-free space for an INSTRAW liaison office in New York.

4. The Board recommended that in consultations with relevant offices of the United Nations, INSTRAW could explore the possibility of having its reports published and disseminated by the Publications Service of the Secretariat pending such time as INSTRAW might again be able to absorb such costs.

5. The Board recommended that the post of Director of INSTRAW be filled for an interim period of six months and that the process of selection should be in close consultation with the Board. Until that position was filled, the Board also recommended that the most senior officer of INSTRAW should work closely with the Board to undertake the necessary action to prepare for the 1999 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

6. The Board decided to establish a working group to prepare a position paper on the future status of INSTRAW for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session at Geneva in 1999. This Working Group would be composed of the Bureau of the Board, one representative of the Secretariat and one representative of the INSTRAW staff. The Working Group would take into consideration the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and document INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.3 in the preparation of the policy paper by mid-June.

7. The Board recommended that a group entitled "Friends of INSTRAW" be established. The group should consist of former members of the Board, eminent women and men, and experts on gender and women's issues. The main task of this group would be to bring visibility to INSTRAW and assist in securing financial and political support.

8. With some modifications agreed upon during its deliberations, the Board endorsed the INSTRAW strategic plan and work programme, 2000–2003 to serve as an early warning system, clearing-house and networking with other institutes on gender issues and the advancement of women.

II. Progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 1998

9. At its 1st meeting, under agenda item 4, the Board reviewed the progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 1998 (INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.2), presented by the former Director of INSTRAW. In introducing the document, she informed the Board that despite the difficult situation INSTRAW was in, it was worthwhile to look at its accomplishments. She reported that the Institute had taken numerous initiatives aimed at revitalization, including: (a) a dynamic research and training programme; (b) preparation of extrabudgetary project proposals and activities; (c) increased dialogue for confidence-building at the inter-agency level, focal points and the Board of Trustees; (d) reinstatement of the internship programme, which allowed for three interns at Headquarters and three in the New York Liaison Office; (e) cost-effectiveness and work efficiency; (f) enhancing the capacity of the Liaison Office, which was not made possible given the lack of funds for posting a P-5 staff member as was planned; (g) structural and substantive evaluation of the Institute; and (h) preparation of a strategic work plan for INSTRAW. She stated that the research programmes were progressing as planned. She reported on her efforts to seek funding for the extrabudgetary proposals and informed the Board of a partnership that had been established with the United Nations University (UNU) for a research project on women and conflict in the Balkans. That project would be initiated once the situation in the region became more stable.

10. The former Director described some of the measures that had been taken in order to increase cost-effectiveness and work efficiency. Among them were: closing of in-house printing facilities; expanding the electronic communication system; and staff reduction measures which resulted in the abolishment of 12 General Service posts and the deferment of filling two Professional posts (D-1 and P-2).

11. A discussion followed in which various Board members expressed their views regarding possible sources of funding and partnership for research and training

programmes which should be further pursued by the Institute. Some of the suggested avenues included, *inter alia*, linkages with focal points, regional bodies and related research institutes, revenue generation through training programmes and the efforts of members of the Board in getting their Governments to pay their pledges.

III. Review of the financial situation of INSTRAW

12. At its 1st, 2nd and 3rd meetings, under agenda item 5, the former Director of INSTRAW presented the report on the assessment of the current financial crisis of INSTRAW (INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.3). The Board also had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.1 and INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.2.

13. The former Director of INSTRAW introduced the assessment report and noted the limited funds with which the Institute had functioned since its inception. She then highlighted the current financial crisis, which had led to management decisions involving staff reductions and other cost-effective measures in order not to jeopardize ongoing programmes. In assessing the factors leading to the current financial and institutional crisis, she noted a number of vulnerabilities in the institutional structure of INSTRAW. In that regard, she mentioned the Institute's autonomous status and sole reliance on voluntary contributions which had at times limited its capacity to benefit from closer contact with the United Nations system. With regard to its funding modality, she indicated that the Institute was not able to secure alternative sources of funding, thereby affecting its resource base.

14. Another factor contained in the report referred to the limited geographic outreach. She explained that the Liaison Office in New York was unable to provide more than logistical and administrative support. Moreover, given the financial constraints, INSTRAW was unable to strengthen that Office and to establish offices in other regions.

15. The former Director also described the three periods of the Institute's history, namely, the growth period during which INSTRAW produced pioneering work (1978–1991), regression, when funds and implementation were steadily declining; and revitalization efforts (1998), in which a new focus was given to the research and training programmes and the level of implementation was increased in comparison to previous years.

16. Both the former Director and some Board members noted and appreciated the work of the Institute despite the difficult circumstances and limited staff. Concern was raised as to whether the ongoing programmes could be finalized, given that only two Professional staff members would remain past 30 June 1999.

17. It was also pointed out that several meetings had been organized since the last session of the Board by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Adviser and the former Director with Permanent Representatives, including two meetings with women Permanent Representatives, and government officials of both donor and non-donor countries, regional groups and other donor sources to raise funds for INSTRAW.

18. Discussions ensued on the actual resources available in the Institute's Trust Fund. As a result, the representatives of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts were requested to submit in writing a statement of the available cash balance to date. That statement, subsequently submitted to the Board, presented a balance sheet which indicated the financial situation of INSTRAW as of 30 April 1999. In response to numerous queries from the Board, the Chief of the Economic, Social and Human Rights Service of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts confirmed that there was an available cash balance of $408,358 in the Trust Fund in addition to the $200,000 operating reserve.

19. After having determined the available cash balance in the Institute's Trust Fund, the Board requested from INSTRAW an estimate of operating costs within the current staffing configuration through 31 December 1999. Upon reviewing the estimated budget submitted by INSTRAW, the Board decided to recommend that the Institute continue to operate with the present core staff until 31 December 1999 in order to enable it to comply with the requirements of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly as well as finalize the ongoing research programmes. Given the procedural requirements of such a measure and the fact that new contracts would need to be issued by June, the Board requested the assistance of the Executive Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in facilitating that process.

20. Regarding the vacant post of Director of INSTRAW, the Board recommended that it be filled as soon as possible in order to assist in matters relating to INSTRAW's compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/48. Until that position was filled, the Board also recommended that the most senior officer of INSTRAW should work closely with the Board to undertake the necessary action to prepare for the forthcoming session of the Council. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General

on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women briefed the Board on steps being taken to secure an individual from within the United Nations system at a suitably senior level to take on the responsibilities of Officer-in-Charge. In the meantime, with the approval of the former President of the Board, the Special Adviser had been in frequent contact with INSTRAW staff to guide the Institute's work.

21. As a measure to increase the Institute's financial reserves on a short-term basis, the Board recommended that Member States be urged to expedite payment of pledged contributions. In that regard, it was decided that the President of the Board should write to Member States encouraging prompt payment. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would also be requested to write a letter to the same effect. In addition, it was agreed that Board members would follow up on unpaid pledges and actively carry out fund-raising with their governments.

22. The representative of the host country, along with several Board members inquired about the amount paid by INSTRAW to the United Nations for programme support costs. After consultations with the representative of the Office of Legal Affairs, the Board decided that the President, accompanied by the former President, should seek a waiver of those charges until such time that the Institute's financial reserves were strengthened. Likewise a similar request would be made for the provision of a rent-free space to accommodate an INSTRAW office in New York. Following a meeting with the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Management, the Board of Trustees was informed that the waiver of programme support costs was not possible. However, the request on both issues would be considered after a written request was made by the President of the Board.

23. Another decision taken by the Board for alleviating the financial constraints affecting the Institute concerned the publication of the forthcoming research studies. Given that the Publications Service of the Secretariat had indicated its interest in printing INSTRAW publications, it was recommended that that option be further pursued for the printing of the research studies.

IV. Other issues of relevance to the functioning of the Institute

24. At its 3rd meeting, the Board considered other issues of relevance to the functioning of the Institute under agenda item 6. The Board had before it a note by the Secretariat entitled "The future status of INSTRAW: policy considerations" (INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.3).

25. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW introduced document INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.3. He suggested that although the report of the Joint Inspection Unit was not yet available, the Board might wish to concentrate its deliberations on the four areas mentioned in paragraph 12 of the document.

26. In reference to the first area concerning the relative importance of the research and training functions for the advancement of women, he proposed two possible models. The first represented a case in which the research agenda would determine the training agenda. Providing an example, he indicated that that could be a case in which an institute's research competence in statistics and indicators might then be the basis for the development of a training programme in that area. Such a training programme would certainly build up competence in a given thematic area, thereby leading to credibility, but would tend to limit the field for training. The second example would be a case in which the training agenda was determined on the basis of market demand, rather than exclusively connected to the research, as was done in the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the Staff College.

27. Continuing with his presentation, he discussed the next two areas outlined in the document, which emphasized linkages with intergovernmental bodies and inter-agency entities. He gave an example of the relationship between the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the Division for Social Policy and Development and the Commission for Social Development. He noted the role of UNRISD in conducting independent research in areas of relevance to the Commission. In its role to service the Commission, the Division for Social Policy and Development was able to utilize that research to feed into the intergovernmental process. He also noted a possible linkage between research and operational activities of the United Nations. As an example, he mentioned the relationship between the Population Division of the Secretariat and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). He pointed out that geographical proximity was an important factor in strengthening those linkages. In that regard he noted that should INSTRAW pursue that model, a liaison office in New York as it had functioned in the past would not be sufficient. Such an office should be staffed at a senior level. He pointed out that the identity of each of the entities involved was not compromised in those institutional modalities and that cooperation rather than competition prevailed.

28. Another area mentioned in the document concerned closer links to the United Nations University and other research institutions. In that regard, he said that with that modality INSTRAW would link to research institutes rather than to the intergovernmental process. He went on to describe the system of centres established by the University in various regions and the funding implications of an INSTRAW link with UNU.

29. After deliberations on the areas outlined by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, the Board thanked the Special Representative and Under-Secretary-General for his very clear statement of the issues. It also expressed its concern that given the complexity of the matter and the lack of more detailed information, the time allowed for the session was not sufficient for it to make a definite recommendation. Therefore, the Board decided to establish a working group which would prepare a position paper on the future status of INSTRAW for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council. The Board expressed its concern that the Working Group should also take into consideration the report of the Joint Inspection Unit when preparing the position paper. The Board agreed that the position paper would be circulated among Board members and the Executive Office of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for comments prior to finalization and submission to the Economic and Social Council by mid-June at the latest. It was agreed that the Working Group would be composed of the Bureau of the Board, a representative of the Secretariat and a representative of the INSTRAW staff.

V. Strategic plan and work programme, 2000–2003 for INSTRAW

30. At its 4th meeting, the Board considered the strategic plan and work programme, 2000–2003 for INSTRAW under item 7 of the provisional agenda (INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.1/Rev.1). The Board had before it documents INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.4 and INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.4.

31. The senior officer of INSTRAW introduced the documents for the consideration of the Board of Trustees by stating that the strategic plan and work programme for INSTRAW had been prepared in compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/48.

32. She began her presentation with an overview of the strategic goals as contained in paragraph 23 of document INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.4, making reference in each case to the proposed action for their achievement as contained in table 1, "Programme and project matrix". In the Board's consideration of the strategic plan, she requested that it bear in mind the fact that the plan had been prepared on the basis of criteria which coincided with those outlined by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW. She pointed out that the Inter-Agency Brainstorming Workshop (3 and 4 May 1999) had made valuable contributions to the issues that would need to be addressed by INSTRAW in its new strategic plan. She further noted that many of the issues raised during the Brainstorming Workshop as contained in document INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.4 had already been addressed in the strategic plan and work programme.

33. Many of the Board members commended the former Director and staff of INSTRAW for the preparation of the strategic plan and work programme. Some members expressed concern that the current financial situation of INSTRAW would hinder the implementation of such a strategy as well as the preparation of a programme budget for the biennium 2000–2001. In the light of that discussion, it was proposed that the strategic goals be reviewed and streamlined in order to present a more focused and realistic strategic plan given the current situation.

34. The Board discussed the contents of section VI of document INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.4, "Financing, staffing and institutional set-up", particularly those paragraphs relating to the role of the Board of Trustees and its modality of operation. As a result, the Board decided to delete paragraphs 71, 72, 73 and 75. At the suggestion of some Board members, it was decided to recommend strongly the creation of a group of Friends of INSTRAW which could comprise former Board members, notable personalities and other relevant experts on gender issues and the advancement of women. It was agreed that such a group could be active in seeking political and financial support for INSTRAW.

35. The Board then reviewed each of the strategic goals as contained in paragraph 23 of the document. After a lengthy discussion as to how to make those goals more attractive to donors while safeguarding the mandate of the Institute, the Board decided to make some modifications to the strategic goals as follows: (a) to merge strategic goals I and IV; (b) to rephrase strategic goal II to indicate that INSTRAW would conduct comparative research; (c) to emphasize the role of INSTRAW in promoting research capacity-building for women's organizations and research centres, especially in developing countries as indicated in strategic goal V; (d) to merge strategic goals VI and VII; and (e) to delete strategic goals III and VIII.

VI. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

36. The nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 7 May 1999. The Board held five meetings.

37. The session was opened by the President of the Board, Ms. Esther Ashton. She welcomed all the Board members, especially the new member, Ms. Cecilia Valcárcel Alcázar, and mentioned that Ms. Mamosebi Theresia Pholo was unable to attend. In her opening remarks, the President of the Board detailed the various activities undertaken on behalf of INSTRAW during her tenure as President. In an effort to gain support for INSTRAW, those activities included meetings with women ambassadors to the United Nations, the representative of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), as well as representatives of the Group of 77 and the European Union. In addition to regular consultations and discussions with the Director of INSTRAW, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Office of Legal Affairs and the Office of the Controller, she also attended sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women where she sought both financial and political support for the Institute.

38. The President addressed the issue of the vacant post of Director of INSTRAW and reiterated the need for the appointment of a senior officer who could provide high-level representation of the Institute in the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in addition to providing follow-up to the Institute's operations and future directions. She also expressed concern about the fact that by the end of June 1999 only two Professional officers would remain at INSTRAW, as it was anticipated that the contracts of all other staff would expire on 30 June 1999.

39. Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, addressed the Board of Trustees and urged that the Board pay close attention to the four suggestions contained in the document entitled "The future status of INSTRAW: policy considerations" (INSTRAW/BT/1999/CRP.3).

40. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women welcomed all participants on behalf of the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW and emphasized the unique importance of the session, given the current situation affecting the Institute. In that regard, she expressed her trust that the Board would make clear recommendations to the Economic and Social Council in order to assist the Council in taking the best decision for the future of INSTRAW. She also emphasized that there was wide support on the part of the management of the United Nations Secretariat and among agencies for INSTRAW to continue to carry out its mandate. She concluded by expressing her gratitude to the host country for its continuous support and to the staff of INSTRAW, including the former Director, for their further efforts in preparing the papers.

41. The Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic welcomed the opportunity to address the Board of Trustees and reiterated the full support of the Government of the Dominican Republic in hosting the headquarters of INSTRAW. Moreover, she reiterated her Government's opposition to moving the headquarters of the Institute to another country, as its location was mandated by Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/11 of 9 May 1979. She cautioned against a decision on the future of INSTRAW being made prior to consideration of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, which would be deliberated on at the next session of the Economic and Social Council. Finally, she restated the position of her Government that an interim director should be appointed as soon as possible.

42. The Senior Officer-in-Charge of INSTRAW welcomed all participants to the nineteenth session and expressed her trust that the deliberations of the Board would yield recommendations and decisions commensurate with the crucial issues currently threatening the existence of INSTRAW. She pointed out that INSTRAW was the only institute within the United Nations mandated to conduct research and training for the advancement of women. Therefore, the imminent threat of ceasing its operations would be detrimental to the international community, for which the research findings of INSTRAW served as important tools for the formulation of policies to benefit women.

43. She continued by informing the Board about the financial crisis, which had required INSTRAW in February 1999 to reformulate its programmes. That resulted in further reductions in staffing. Given the obligations of the Institute to report on Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/48 and follow up on its recommendations, she noted the need for additional funds to be released from the current cash reserve of INSTRAW to allow for the extension of contracts beyond June 1999. In order to safeguard the future

of INSTRAW, she urged the Board to take immediate and definite action.

B. Attendance

44. The following members of the Board attended the session: Selma Acuner (Turkey), Esther Ashton (Bolivia), Zakia Bouaziz (Tunisia), Maria Jonas (Austria), Noelie Kangoye (Burkina Faso), Mona Chemali Khalaf (Lebanon), Norica Nicolai (Romania), Glenda Simms (Jamaica), Amaryllis Torres (Philippines) and Cecilia Valcárcel Alcázar (Spain).

45. The following ex officio members of the Board also attended: the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to INSTRAW, Mr. Nitin Desai; the representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) representing all the regional commissions; and the representative of the Dominican Republic, the host country.

46. Also attending the session were the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Ms. Angela King; the former Director of INSTRAW, Ms. Yakin Erturk; the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Ms. Minou Tavarez Mirabal; and the Senior Officer-in-Charge, Ms. Tatjana Sikoska. The Chief of the Economic, Social and Human Rights Service of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Mr. Ali Khamis, and the Programme Budget Officer, Mr. Mikhail Liarski, were also in attendance. Mr. Anthony Miller, Principal Legal Officer, Office of Legal Affairs, attended as well.

C. Election of officers

47. At its 1st meeting, in accordance with rule 7 of its rules of procedure, the Board elected the following officers by acclamation:

President:
Ms. Amaryllis Torres (Philippines);

Vice-President:
Ms. Zakia Bouaziz (Tunisia);

Rapporteur:
Ms. Glenda Simms (Jamaica).

48. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, one member expressed appreciation for the work of the outgoing Bureau.

49. The newly elected President thanked the members of the Board for her election and expressed her commitment to fulfilling expectations in guiding the discussions of the nineteenth session. She stated that having been elected President was a distinct honour for her as well as for her country and region. She added that she would be even more honoured if the current session of the Board of Trustees arrived at decisions that would positively affect INSTRAW in the future. Moreover, she stated that the Institute was a symbol of gender commitments at an international level, and hoped that the session would identify means to empower INSTRAW.

D. Agenda

50. At its 1st meeting, the Board of Trustees adopted its provisional agenda (INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.1/Rev.1), as orally amended, by consensus. The agenda read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Election of officers.
4. Progress report on the activities of INSTRAW for 1998.
5. Review of the financial situation of INSTRAW.
6. Other issues of relevance to the functioning of INSTRAW.
7. Strategic work plan for INSTRAW.
8. Adoption of the report of the Board on its nineteenth session.
9. Closure of the nineteenth session of the Board of Trustees.

51. A member of the Board expressed appreciation to the staff for the timely distribution of all documents in the various languages.

E. Adoption of the report of the Board on its nineteenth session

52. At its 5th meeting, on 7 May 1999, the Board adopted the report on its nineteenth session (INSTRAW/BT/1999/R.5 and Add.1–4), together with a working paper on matters to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

53. Prior to the closure of the nineteenth session, the Board decided to target tentatively, depending on the Institute's financial situation, a date in February 2000 for the holding of its twentieth session.